

Please, please, please reject the petition of the NAB (04-160) to prohibit locally-oriented programming via satellite radio. I'd like to make one point about how the listening public is underserved by existing terrestrial commercial radio. I live in Paoli, 25 miles outside of Philadelphia, and have basically one choice to get a traffic report: KYW-AM. (Owned by Viacom.) This station has a monopoly on news radio in the Philadelphia market. They do traffic reports every 10 minutes.

If I am stuck in a traffic jam and tune in for a report from KYW, I usually get the following:

5 minutes of "news"--usually news about some developments in the perpetually corrupt Philadelphia city government or a sensationalized report of some urban crime, all read over a deafening and annoying tickertape sound effect. (i.e. news that has nothing to do with me, who lives and works outside the city)

4 minutes of commercial load

Then, a one-minute traffic report WHICH USUALLY TELLS ME NOTHING, because I am driving in Chester County outside of Philadelphia, an area which KYW could not care less about and on which they rarely report.

If I am lucky enough to have a traffic problem occur during a slow traffic news day in Philadelphia, I will get traffic info relevant to me...when I am 10 minutes into the traffic jam and it is too late for me to follow an alternate route. The wait made the report useless.

Here's the same scenario with XM: I notice a slowing in traffic. I get the traffic report RIGHT NOW, so I can act on it by getting off the freeway, or deciding to stay on because the delay is brief. The XM report is more thorough and consistent in covering areas where I actually drive, and the commercial load is a barely noticeable 15 second spot--usually a PSA--AFTER I have received the traffic information.

This is a minor issue, but it's another case of mega-broadcasters failing to meet consumer needs. There are dark AM signals in Philadelphia, and Viacom could introduce an all-traffic channel. They have not done so. They have failed. Why punish XM and Sirius for filling a need that big terrestrial commercial broadcasters have failed to?

XM traffic is a godsend. Don't take it away.